

Offering Ārati

Required Paraphernalia

- Make sure the following items are present:

For all āratīs:

- 1) a bell on a plate
- 2) an *ācamana* cup containing fresh water and a spoon
- 3) a conch (for blowing) with a water-filled *loṭā* for rinsing it
- 4) a receptacle to catch the water from rinsing the conch (placed just outside the deity room, in the temple room)
- 5) a picture of your spiritual master

In addition, for full ārati:

- 1) an incense holder with an odd number of incense sticks
- 2) a camphor lamp (for midday ārati)
- 3) a ghee lamp with an odd number of wicks (at least five)
- 4) a conch for *arghya* water, with a stand
- 5) a water-pot, filled with water (this is for the *arghya* water to be offered in the conch)
- 6) a handkerchief
- 7) flowers on a plate
- 8) a *cāmara* (yak-tail whisk)
- 9) a peacock fan (only in warm weather)

For dhūpa-ārati:

- 1) an incense holder with an odd number of sticks
- 2) flowers on a plate
- 3) a *cāmara*
- 4) a peacock fan (only in warm weather)

Preliminary Activities for Ārati

- Outside the deity room, after performing *ācamana* (if not already done for previous services), offer obeisances to your spiritual master, requesting to assist him in the worship.
- Prepare the *samānya-arghya* if not already done.
- After cleaning the place where the *ārati* paraphernalia will be set up (either on a low table, on the floor, or, if space allows, on the altar itself), bring the tray with paraphernalia and place them in the order of offering.
- If there are standing or hanging oil or ghee lamp for lighting incense and *ārati* lamps light them now.
- While ringing the bell, open the deity room doors. Then, take the blowing conch shell and *loṭā* with water just outside the deity room (without the bell), blow the conch three times, rinse it off over a receptacle placed outside for that purpose, and then bring the conch and *loṭā* back inside. (You may place the conch horizontally on top of the *loṭā*.) Next wash your hands with water from the *ācamana* cup and open the curtain while ringing the bell.

Purifying the Items (Upacāras)

Before offering each item (*upacāra*), first purify your right hand with a few drops of water from the *ācamana* cup and then the sprinkle the item (*upacāra*) with water from the *ācamana* cup.

Offering Procedure

- While standing on an *āsana* and ringing a bell, present the incense first to your spiritual master by waving it in three or four graceful circles, and then present it to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Caitanya in the same manner.
- Then, with the consciousness that you are offering it on behalf of your spiritual master and with the blessings of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Caitanya, offer it with the full number of circles (listed below) to the main deity.
- After offering the incense to the main deity, offer it as *prasāda* to the Lord’s associates in descending order, and to the *guru-paramparā*—senior to junior. This may be done with seven or three circles for each personality, depending on time allowance.
- Then “distribute it” (with one or three circles) to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas as the *prasāda* of the Lord and His associates.
- Offer the remaining items in a similar way.
- Offered items should not be mixed with unoffered items. You may place offered items back on the plate that was used to bring in the paraphernalia, provided no unoffered paraphernalia remains on it.

How to Offer Each Item

Offer all the items, except the *cāmara* and fan, by moving them in clockwise circles while ringing a bell with your left hand (above waist level), fixing your attention on the deities.

- **Incense:** offer seven circles around the whole body of the Lord.
- **Lamp(s):** offer four circles to the lotus feet, two circles to the navel, and three circles to the Lord’s face; then offer seven circles to the Lord’s whole body.
- **Arghya** in a conch: offer three circles to the Lord’s head and seven circles to the whole body of the Lord. Then pour a small amount of the offered *arghya* back into the water pot before proceeding to offer *arghya* to the next personality. (*Ārati arghya*: plain or scented water).
- **Cloth:** offer seven times around the Lord’s body.
- **Flowers:** offer seven times around the Lord’s body.
- **Cāmara:** wave before the Lord a suitable number of times.
- **Fan:** wave before the Lord a suitable number of times.

Completing the Ārati

- After completing the *ārati*, blow the conch three times outside the deity room, as at the beginning of the *ārati*. Then distribute the *arghya* and flower *prasāda* to the assembled devotees.
- Chant the *prema-dhvani mantras* if the *kīrtana* leader or another devotee in the temple does not chant them.
- Then with joined palms offer *praṇāma* prayers softly to your spiritual master and Their Lordships.
- Next remove the *ārati* paraphernalia from the deity room, clean the area and articles, and at last offer *daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* (prostrated obeisances) outside the deity room.